

From: Seneca, Roy [Seneca.Roy@epa.gov]
Sent: 1/22/2020 2:17:40 PM
To: Servidio, Cosmo [Servidio.Cosmo@epa.gov]; Esher, Diana [Esher.Diana@epa.gov]; Fields, Jenifer [fields.jenifer@epa.gov]; Purnell, Rhonda [Purnell.rhonda@epa.gov]; Gordon, Michael [Gordon.Mike@epa.gov]; Nitsch, Chad [Nitsch.Chad@epa.gov]; Landis, Jeffrey [Landis.Jeffrey@epa.gov]; White, Terri-A [White.Terri-A@epa.gov]; regionalpress [regionalpress@epa.gov]
Subject: EPA Mid-Atlantic Region Headlines - Wednesday, January 22, 2020

EPA Mid-Atlantic Region Headlines

Wednesday, January 22, 2020

*** DAILY HOT LIST ***

Chicago developer Hilco's \$240 million bid wins auction for bankrupt Philadelphia refinery

PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER Bankrupt Philadelphia Energy Solutions has agreed to sell its shuttered South Philly refinery complex to a Chicago development company with experience repurposing old industrial properties for new uses, likely marking an end to the site's 150-year-old history as a petroleum refinery. Hilco Redevelopment Partners, a Chicago real estate firm that has acquired old power plant sites in Boston and New Jersey, and is building warehouses on a former steel mill site in Baltimore, agreed to pay \$240 million to acquire the 1,300-acre refinery site during a closed-door auction Friday, according to a U.S. Bankruptcy Court filing. PES chief executive Mark Smith announced the deal Tuesday in a memo to employees, saying that Hilco's affiliate, HRP Philadelphia Holdings LLC, would announce its plans for the site at a later date. "We will continue to maintain the refinery complex, remove the hydrocarbon inventory in the facility, protect the facility and prepare for a safe handoff of the facility to HRP Philadelphia Holdings LLC, which is expected to occur within 60-90 days," Smith said in his memo. Hilco's selection means that Philadelphia's largest available commercial real estate parcel may emerge from bankruptcy with a less intensive industrial capacity, a goal of environmental and community activists who have rallied against the oil refinery. After more than a century of refining, the site will also need environmental remediation. But it's not immediately clear when that will happen, and who will pay the bill...

What's hidden in this Delaware town's groundwater? Contamination, PFAS and health concerns

WILMINGTON NEWS JOURNAL If it really does take decades to remove the toxic chemicals and metals found in one southern Delaware town's groundwater supply, it will be too late for Nancy Sorge. "I'll be dead by then," she said. "But other people won't." Sorge lives in Blades, a tiny town near the former "Nylon Capital of the World" in western Sussex County. Almost two years ago, residents learned that manmade chemicals had found their way into their drinking water, prompting calls for residents to switch to bottled water until officials could install an expensive filtration system. Even though Sorge hasn't lived in Blades for long, she worries about long-term health effects for her neighbors. Experts aren't yet sure how serious the risks may be or how long the toxic substances were in Blades' drinking water before the new filters, added in 2018, were installed. It's been two decades since the chemicals, known as PFAS, were found polluting water supplies near chemical plants that handled them, like Washington Works in West Virginia. But it was just two years ago that tiny Blades captured headlines across the state. Sorge said bought her house just a few months after the filters were installed but no one told her details about the water situation... If Blades earns Superfund

designation, it could one day lead to determining where the contamination came from, hold someone responsible for it, and ultimately, clean the groundwater. The state Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control said it looked to the EPA for assistance in protecting public drinking water wells, over 100 residential wells, surface water, and wetlands surrounding the site that "may have been exposed to electroplating compounds and PFAS," EPA spokesman Jeffrey Landis said in an email. But to local officials, a potential Superfund designation raises concerns in the mostly working-class town...

Delaware's exposure to 'forever' chemicals: Where PFAS have been found, what officials are doing

WILMINGTON NEWS JOURNAL Most commonly known as PFAS, per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances are the potentially harmful "forever" chemicals that have put pressure on major chemical companies and environmental regulators to figure out the consequences of their widespread presence. These man-made chemicals include substances like PFOA or C8, PFOS, and GenX, but there are thousands of different PFAS compounds that have been released into the environment since they first came into use in the 1950s. Popular for their ability to repel water, stains, grease and heat, the chemicals were used in products like Teflon, military-grade firefighting foam, stain-resistant carpeting, cleaning products, clothing and in industrial plating operations. PFAS do not really break down in the environment, and they can build up in the bodies of people or animals that ingest them or are exposed to them. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention asserts that most Americans have been exposed to the chemicals, or have PFOA or PFOS in their blood. Officials insist more studies are needed to understand human health risks. A 2018 study from the same agency acknowledges likely links between human exposure to the chemicals and problems with fertility and pregnancy, liver damage, high cholesterol, thyroid disease, decreased response to vaccines and asthma. Another study cited by the CDC identifies the chemicals as "possibly carcinogenic" to humans, with evidence of "increases in testicular and kidney cancer ... observed in highly exposed humans."...

Delaware officials propose \$50 million investment for clean water needs

WILMINGTON NEWS JOURNAL Contaminated drinking water in Sussex County. Failing wastewater systems in Kent County. Flooded streets in South Wilmington. Those are just a few examples of the water issues faced by Delaware residents, some caused by improper management of resources and others by a lack of funding, or both. After years of trying to pass legislation to create a steady funding stream to start chipping away at old, failing infrastructure and persistent pollution problems, Delaware politicians say they have finally found a way to get started. It's called the Clean Water for Delaware Act, and Gov. John Carney is ready to pour \$50 million into a trust fund to get it rolling in the upcoming fiscal year. "From the Brandywine Creek to the Inland Bays, we have special natural places in our state. Water is Delaware's most basic and valuable resource, and we should protect that resource for future generations," Carney said in a press release Tuesday. "And we need to make sure that all Delaware families have access to clean drinking water. Delawareans deserve clean water. It's as simple as that." The bill, which needs to be approved by the Legislature, aims to address drinking water, wastewater and drainage needs. That could include funding millions of dollars' worth of infrastructure-related projects or smaller-scale projects for individual communities, officials say. .. Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control Secretary Shawn Garvin pointed to potential projects, like rehabilitation of the Delaware City wastewater treatment plant and sewer expansions in Kent County. He also noted the severe drainage and flooding issues in the Sussex County community of Oak Orchard, which could benefit. It also makes it easier for low-income, under served communities to access the funding. Previously, neighborhoods or small communities that suffered from issues like failing septic systems, which can pollute nearby drinking water wells, may not have had the resources to apply for state or federal grants or loans. "For 30 years, everybody's been saying we have to figure out how to address these communities," Garvin said. "This bill is going to underscore that effort."

A decade of cleaner air ended in controversy and questions about Allegheny County's future

PUBLIC SOURCE.ORG - PITTSBURGH Allegheny County reckons with new challenges and questions about priorities after a decade of improving air quality ended in one of the worst pollution episodes in recent memory. For Allegheny County, 2019 was a year of reckoning with the consequences of two fires at the U.S. Steel plant in Clairton. A blaze in December 2018 was followed by a second fire the next June. Meanwhile, the American Lung Association gave Allegheny County's air another F grade, and residents logged thousands of new complaints on the Smell PGH app. The county's air in 2018 was actually the cleanest it had been since the passage of the Clean Air Act in 1963. But as 2019 ended, an eerie smog hung over the area. Lingered for six days, it contained some of the worst air pollution in recent memory. County Executive Rich Fitzgerald started to field a lot of questions during the smog event, including from his wife: "Why do you keep looking at your phone?" ...

B. Braun to significantly cut cancer-causing chemical emissions at Lehigh Valley plant

ALLENTOWN MORNING CALL (Jan. 19) Months after federal regulators raised concerns about carcinogenic chemicals spewing from a plant near Lehigh Valley International Airport into residential neighborhoods, the company has submitted a plan to reduce those emissions by more than 99%. B. Braun made the claim in a Nov. 26 air quality plan filed with the state Department of Environmental Protection. The German company did not note when the emissions would be so significantly reduced. The medical and pharmaceutical device plant in Hanover Township, Lehigh County, is one of the country's top emitters of ethylene oxide, a chemical that has been used to sterilize about half the medical devices and equipment produced in the U.S. each year. In July, the federal Environmental Protection Agency raised concern about the company's emissions to the DEP, though B. Braun was breaking no laws because it did not exceed its emissions cap. The EPA flagged the chemical as a carcinogen in 2016, after a decade of research found a link between it and certain cancers. The state permits B. Braun to release no more than 20,000 pounds a year of the chemical, and the company was emitting less than half that amount before reducing emissions in 2015. The risk associated with breathing ethylene oxide was largely unknown to people living near the B. Braun plant, until The Morning Call wrote about the EPA's concerns last summer. The story cited EPA data showing the cancer risk solely from ethylene oxide in one Hanover Township neighborhood to be 200 times as high as the Pennsylvania average of 2.4 per 1 million people. The colorless gas is linked to breast cancer and non-Hodgkin lymphoma, among other cancers...

Why stormwater poses an increasing challenge for Virginia

VIRGINIA MERCURY On July 8, as rush hour clogged the roads of Alexandria, a slow-moving southbound storm caused a deluge of rain to fall over the city. And fall. And fall. And fall. All throughout the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area, precipitation and flood records were shattered. By the end of a single hour, 3.44 inches of rain had been recorded at Reagan National Airport just north of Alexandria. The downpour caused the Potomac and creeks all over the region to breach their banks, sending floodwaters into streets and yards and parking lots. At the U.S. Geological Survey flood gauge at Cameron Run, a stream running along the city's southern border, water levels reached almost 16 feet — well over the flood stage set by the agency. The record-breaking rain was an aberration, the kind of weather event no municipal drainage system is designed to handle. As Jesse Maines, chief of Alexandria's stormwater management division and a member of the board of the Virginia Municipal Stormwater Association, noted, "You don't build the church for Easter Sunday." But it also revealed exactly why Virginia lawmakers have increasingly become concerned with stormwater and the challenges it poses on both a state and local level. It's not the most glamorous or flashy of the political issues the General Assembly will be taking up this session. But to see how it impacts every resident of Virginia, just look out the window the next time it rains.

The Plan To Protect The Chesapeake Bay is Failing, And It's Pennsylvania's Fault

GRIST In early January, members of the Chesapeake Bay Commission sat in a gray conference room in Annapolis, Maryland, for a routine meeting. The 21-member legislative body, with representatives from Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Maryland, convenes regularly to coordinate interstate efforts to restore and protect the Chesapeake Bay. But as the

meeting drew to a close, EPA Chesapeake Bay Program director Dana Aunkst got up and delivered a demoralizing message to the group. “The TMDL itself is not enforceable,” he said. He was referring to the Total Maximum Daily Load, a set of science-based limits for three pollutants — nitrogen, phosphorous, and sediment — flowing into the bay. The states in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed have agreed to achieve the TMDL by 2025, and the EPA committed to enforcing it under the terms of a 2010 settlement. But Aunkst went on to describe the TMDL as merely “an informational document” that was “aspirational.” Aunkst’s comments were jarring to some in the room, but they weren’t entirely out of left field. Pennsylvania, by far the largest source of pollution entering the Chesapeake Bay Watershed, has failed to meet its pollution reduction benchmarks for years, with little response from the EPA. This single state’s negligence threatens the success of the entire regional program. The Chesapeake is the largest estuary in the United States, a nationally significant economic resource, and a crucial habitat for thousands of species. But the influx of pollution from upstream sources has led to fishery declines, recurring “dead zones” where pollutants starve aquatic animals of oxygen, and regular algae blooms that suffocate underwater plant life. Even after nearly 10 years of strategic planning and implementation of these pollution reduction plans by neighboring states, its overall health is still poor. And Pennsylvania seems increasingly to blame.

Career Employees Allege EPA Leaders Silenced Them on Key Deregulation Effort

GOVERNMENT EXECUTIVE The Environmental Protection Agency suppressed the work of its career employees and dismissed legitimate science in taking a key deregulatory action, dozens of former and current employees have alleged. The employees are asking investigators to discipline the top officials responsible. The [complaint](#), issued by the nonprofit advocacy group Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility, concerned orders from EPA’s top brass during its process of repealing the Waters of the United States rule implemented during the Obama administration. The current and former employees, made up mostly of EPA staff but also of Army Corps of Engineers and Fish and Wildlife Service workers, called on the EPA inspector general and scientific integrity officer to launch investigations and hold the political appointees accountable. They named EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler and a half-dozen top officials in the agency’s offices of Water and General Counsel in their complaint. The complainants said political leadership consistently violated provisions of EPA’s Scientific Integrity Policy throughout the deregulatory process. That included when career employees were “explicitly cautioned” not to provide formal comments on the rule that would then become part of its docket, resulting in those comments “being withheld from the public.” This also violated a provision of the integrity policy that prohibits leadership from “intimidating or coercing scientists to alter scientific data, findings or professional opinions,” PEER wrote on behalf of the former and current employees...

PENNSYLVANIA

PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER

[Chicago developer Hilco’s \\$240 million bid wins auction for bankrupt Philadelphia refinery](#) Bankrupt Philadelphia Energy Solutions has agreed to sell its shuttered South Philly refinery complex to a Chicago development company with experience repurposing old industrial properties for new uses, likely marking an end to the site’s 150-year-old history as a petroleum refinery. Hilco Redevelopment Partners, a Chicago real estate firm that has acquired old power plant sites in Boston and New Jersey, and is building warehouses on a former steel mill site in Baltimore, agreed to pay \$240 million to acquire the 1,300-acre refinery site during a closed-door auction Friday, according to a U.S. Bankruptcy Court filing. PES chief executive Mark Smith announced the deal Tuesday in a memo to employees, saying that Hilco’s affiliate, HRP Philadelphia Holdings LLC, would announce its plans for the site at a later date. “We will continue to maintain the refinery complex, remove the hydrocarbon inventory in the facility, protect the facility and prepare for a safe handoff of the facility to HRP Philadelphia Holdings LLC, which is expected to occur within 60-90 days,” Smith said in his memo. Hilco’s selection means that Philadelphia’s largest available commercial real estate parcel may emerge from bankruptcy with a less intensive industrial capacity, a goal of environmental and community activists who have rallied against the oil refinery. After more than a century of refining, the site will also need environmental remediation. But it’s not immediately clear when that will happen, and who will pay the bill...

Opinion: Gov. Wolf's next budget should address environmental protection (By Pa. State Rep. Greg Vitali) On Feb. 4, Gov. Tom Wolf will propose a commonwealth budget for fiscal year 2021. This budget should address the chronic understaffing and underfunding of the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). Wolf's budget last year did not propose any increases in DEP staffing and, not surprisingly, the final budget approved by the Pennsylvania General Assembly contained none. Unless the governor takes a leadership role in strengthening the DEP, it will remain in its weakened state. The DEP has suffered an almost 30% reduction in staff since 2002, losing over 900 positions. This staff reduction has compromised the department's ability to monitor and reduce air and water pollution, regulate oil and gas development, plug abandoned oil and gas wells, clean up hazardous sites, and protect the Chesapeake Bay. Air quality -- DEP's Bureau of Air Quality has eliminated 99 positions since 2000. A 2018 DEP air program report indicated that "fewer Department staff to conduct inspections, respond to complaints, and pursue enforcement actions will result in less oversight of regulated industry ... [and] reduced protection of the environment and public health and welfare of the citizens of this Commonwealth." ... Reducing pollution in Chesapeake Bay -- Pennsylvania's poor progress in reducing pollution runoff from its 33,600 farms in the Chesapeake Bay watershed threatens local rivers and streams, as well as the recovery of the Chesapeake Bay. In December, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency found that Pennsylvania's federally mandated bay cleanup plan fell 25% short of meeting its nitrogen reduction goals. The EPA also found Pennsylvania had failed to identify where it would get the \$1.9 billion needed to implement this plan. On Jan. 8, Maryland Gov. Larry Hogan directed his attorney general to sue Pennsylvania for failing to meet its pollution reduction goals...

Spotted lanternfly could cost Pennsylvania \$324 million a year, Penn State study finds Researchers at Pennsylvania State University say that if the spotted lanternfly infestation spreads across the entire state, it could drain an estimated \$324 million from the economy annually and cost 2,800 jobs because of the fecund pests' voracious hunger for trees and valuable crops. In an even more severe scenario, the authors from the university's College of Agricultural Sciences calculated that the invasive species could cause up to \$554 million annually in damages and a loss of 5,000 jobs if not contained, according to a report funded by an arm of the General Assembly. The university says the study is the first of its kind to look at the financial impact of the spotted lanternfly, which devours ornamental plants, trees, and other vegetation. Currently, the researchers say, the insect is causing \$50 million a year in damages and the loss of 484 jobs in the southeastern part of the state. The spotted lanternfly is present in Philadelphia and counties that surround it... SEPTA's historic Route 15 trolleys are coming off the line, replaced with buses for at least a year "It's kind of the right moment for us to pull them in, take a look at them, rebuild things where needed, where necessary and to get those cars back on the line," said Scott Sauer, SEPTA's assistant general manager for operations...

KYW NEWS RADIO PHILADELPHIA

Cancer causing chemical PFAS found in drinking water in cities including Philadelphia (Audio link) A new study finds what researchers consider to be "high levels" of the chemicals PFAS in public drinking water in dozens of American cities, including Philadelphia. KYW Newsradio's Kim Glovas reports the people behind the study are calling on the government to revise its standards:

PHILLY VOICE

Philadelphia teachers' union files lawsuit against School District over asbestos issue The Philadelphia Federation of Teachers (PFT) filed a lawsuit on Monday against the School District of Philadelphia over the district's handling of the persistent asbestos problem in some of the city's oldest school buildings. The PFT accused the School District of failing to keep approximately 125,000 students and 13,000 employees safe from asbestos in its oldest buildings. "From start to finish, the district's egregious missteps have shown a disregard for the health of my members and our students," PFT President Jerry Jordan said on Monday. "Not only is the process by which the district deals with known hazards extraordinarily flawed, but also, from the start, they are missing even identifying extremely hazardous conditions." The complaint was filed in Common Pleas Court on Monday, and it seeks "immediate relief" in that it asks a judge to force the School District to agree to the PFT's requests. Those demands include the performance of inspections of all schools in Philadelphia, working together with the PFT to come up with a court-approved plan that protects both students and staff from asbestos, and conducting all inspections with the involvement and consent of the teachers' union with the expectation that the PFT can access all results and reports.

The teachers' union lawsuit comes just three days after the School District closed McClure Elementary in the Hunting Park neighborhood of North Philadelphia this past Friday for additional cleaning. The school had reopened last Wednesday after being closed for three weeks due to asbestos treatment, but tests last Thursday night revealed air samples were "slightly elevated" with asbestos levels...

PITTSBURGH POST-GAZETTE

Pennsylvania board votes to raise shale well permit fees 150%

HARRISBURG — Permit fees for shale gas wells in Pennsylvania will more than double under a rule change approved by a state environmental board on Tuesday. The fee to drill a new Marcellus or Utica shale well will rise from \$5,000 to \$12,500 — the highest in the U.S. Regulators with the Department of Environmental Protection said the hike is necessary to maintain the program that permits and inspects the commonwealth's vast number of new and old wells. Permit fees are the program's primary source of funding but applications have declined significantly in recent years. At the increased rate, the fee will amount to 0.16% of the \$8 million it costs to drill an unconventional well, DEP said. Critics of the increase say it is high enough to discourage companies from drilling new wells and may only compound DEP's funding problems by driving permit applications even lower. The increase must still be reviewed by the environmental committees in the state House and Senate and Pennsylvania's Independent Regulatory Review Commission before it can take effect. The department has received far fewer permits than the 2,600 a year it counted on getting ...

PENNSYLVANIA CAPITAL STAR

'We're failing to meet many of our goals,' DEP official says as environmental oversight board passes hefty fee hike A state environmental oversight board agreed to increase the permit fee for natural gas drilling by 150 percent, arguing that the hike was needed to fund the state's regulatory program. During a meeting Tuesday, the Environmental Quality Board hiked the fee to \$12,500 for any well, up from \$5,000 for non-vertical wells and \$4,200 for vertical wells. Even as permit applications have declined from the peak of the gas boom, inspections have gone up, according to Department of Environmental Protection oil and gas chief Scott Perry. While the agency has adopted new policies and digitized inspections to cut costs and increase efficiency, Perry said there isn't much more that can be done under the current budget. "We're failing to meet many of our goals and we have IT projects that are going unmet," Perry said. According to the 2012 state law governing the natural gas industry, the permit fee should "bear a reasonable relationship to the cost of administering this chapter." The department estimates an annual budget of \$25 million. The state's impact fee — a tax on each well drilled, not on the gas extracted — provides \$6 million each year to the DEP for oil and gas regulation. That is a small fraction of the \$198 million the fee brought in last year...

WHYY PHILADELPHIA

N.J. DEP's PFAS directive to chemical companies will take 'years' to resolve The state Department of Environmental Protection says it will take "years" to resolve its dispute with five chemical companies which it has accused of contaminating many areas of New Jersey with toxic PFAS chemicals. Some nine months after issuing a strongly worded "Directive" to the companies to test, treat and remove the chemicals from soil and water around their facilities, the DEP issued a statement on Jan. 17 in response to a question from NJ Spotlight on why it had said nothing publicly about the initiative since announcing it in March 2019. "As one part of its ongoing efforts to protect New Jersey residents from the PFAS group of chemicals, the DEP continues to engage in discussions and litigation with the companies named in the directive," spokesman Larry Hajna wrote in an email. "These are very complex discussions that will take years to resolve in order to address PFAS contamination throughout the state." Environmental campaigners said the DEP's new prediction that it would take years for any resolution with the chemical companies raised questions about whether it was backing away from its original demands in the face of strong pushback from the chemical industry. The directive, based on four state environmental laws, said the companies were responsible for "significant contamination of New Jersey's natural resources" with PFAS chemicals including PFNA (perfluorononanoic acid), PFOS (perfluorooctanesulfonic acid) and PFOA (perfluorooctanoic acid), all of which have been linked to illnesses including some cancers, immune-system problems, ulcerative colitis, and elevated cholesterol, according to state and federal studies...

PUBLIC SOURCE.ORG - PITTSBURGH

A decade of cleaner air ended in controversy and questions about Allegheny County's future Allegheny County reckons

with new challenges and questions about priorities after a decade of improving air quality ended in one of the worst pollution episodes in recent memory. For Allegheny County, 2019 was a year of reckoning with the consequences of two fires at the U.S. Steel plant in Clairton. A blaze in December 2018 was followed by a second fire the next June. Meanwhile, the American Lung Association gave Allegheny County's air another F grade, and residents logged thousands of new complaints on the Smell PGH app. The county's air in 2018 was actually the cleanest it had been since the passage of the Clean Air Act in 1963. But as 2019 ended, an eerie smog hung over the area. Lingered for six days, it contained some of the worst air pollution in recent memory. County Executive Rich Fitzgerald started to field a lot of questions during the smog event, including from his wife: "Why do you keep looking at your phone?"...

ALLENTOWN MORNING CALL

B. Braun to significantly cut cancer-causing chemical emissions at Lehigh Valley plant Months after federal regulators raised concerns about carcinogenic chemicals spewing from a plant near Lehigh Valley International Airport into residential neighborhoods, the company has submitted a plan to reduce those emissions by more than 99%. B. Braun made the claim in a Nov. 26 air quality plan filed with the state Department of Environmental Protection. The German company did not note when the emissions would be so significantly reduced. The medical and pharmaceutical device plant in Hanover Township, Lehigh County, is one of the country's top emitters of ethylene oxide, a chemical that has been used to sterilize about half the medical devices and equipment produced in the U.S. each year. In July, the federal Environmental Protection Agency raised concern about the company's emissions to the DEP, though B. Braun was breaking no laws because it did not exceed its emissions cap. The EPA flagged the chemical as a carcinogen in 2016, after a decade of research found a link between it and certain cancers. The state permits B. Braun to release no more than 20,000 pounds a year of the chemical, and the company was emitting less than half that amount before reducing emissions in 2015. The risk associated with breathing ethylene oxide was largely unknown to people living near the B. Braun plant, until The Morning Call wrote about the EPA's concerns last summer. The story cited EPA data showing the cancer risk solely from ethylene oxide in one Hanover Township neighborhood to be 200 times as high as the Pennsylvania average of 2.4 per 1 million people. The colorless gas is linked to breast cancer and non-Hodgkin lymphoma, among other cancers...

FOX 43 HARRISBURG

What right does Maryland have to sue Pennsylvania? FOX43 has reported on Maryland's threat to press legal action against the Commonwealth and the Environmental Protection Agency. The state's Governor, Larry Hogan, claims Pennsylvania is not doing enough to prevent contamination from the Susquehanna River from flowing into the Chesapeake Bay. So, given his stance, suing Pennsylvania seems reasonable -- but why sue the EPA? It seems that Maryland does have legal rights in this situation. Those rights are outlined in the Clean Water Act. The CWA gives the EPA the right to implement a host of pollution control programs....The Chesapeake Bay Foundation is holding itself accountable by doing its part to limit the amount of polluted runoff into the Bay. They say much of the pollution that ends up in creeks and streams may be caused by pesticides, fertilizers and even salts used to melt snow. They add those toxins, in addition to many more, are then carried by rain and other precipitation into the water. One idea the Chesapeake Bay Foundation has to curb the pollution is strategically planting trees. The foundation had partnered with the Keystone 10 Million Trees Partnership. The goal is to plant 10 million trees across areas known as priority landscapes. For example, places like farmlands close to bodies of water. The organization hopes to plant all 10 million trees by the end of 2025.

Maryland blames Pennsylvania for pollution problems, and one foundation in PA is taking Maryland's side The Chesapeake Bay Foundation in Harrisburg is taking Maryland's side when it comes to a threat of legal action against Pennsylvania. The battle centers on pollution that critics claim is making its way into the Chesapeake Bay. Maryland's Governor Larry Hogan announced in January he was directing Maryland's Attorney General to pursue legal actions against the EPA and Pennsylvania in an attempt to hold Pennsylvania accountable for what Hogan claimed was the Keystone State's failure to step up and take responsibility for sediment and debris that pours into the Chesapeake Bay via the Susquehanna River. The Chesapeake Bay Foundation supports it because the foundation's Executive Director in Pennsylvania Harry Campbell told FOX43, "right now, Pennsylvania is substantially behind in meeting commitments." Those commitments, Campbell said, fall under the Chesapeake Clean Water Blueprint, or Bay TMDL, which sets a pollution reduction requirement for each state in the Bay's watershed. "Pennsylvania has come up with a number of plans but has failed to actually invest in those plans," said Campbell. He added, "the investments in clean water are

necessary so as to achieve those commitments and it starts with the administration and the legislature figuring out how to make that happen." Campbell said Pennsylvania is the number one source of nitrogen pollution going into the bay. The Foundation claims, Pennsylvania is also the lynchpin of the Chesapeake Bay cleanup with the state making up the bulk of the Susquehanna River's watershed and with the Susquehanna supplying nearly 50 percent of the freshwater that enters the Bay...

SCRANTON TIMES TRIBUNE

Editorial: Veto Conventional Gas Drilling Bill

PA ENVIRONMENT DIGEST BLOG (By PA DEP)

Earthworks: Rolling Stone Article Links Oil & Gas Waste Radioactivity To Worker Cancers, Wastewater Trucks Operating Illegally In response to a January 21 Rolling Stone article on the health and environmental effects of oil and gas drilling wastewater, Earthworks' Research and Policy Analyst Melissa Troutman issued this statement-- "The oil and gas industry has contaminated communities across the country with its radioactive waste, and the Rolling Stone investigation sheds light into two new damning instances in which industry puts human life at risk. "The oil and gas workers' cancer cases in Louisiana, which the Centers for Disease Control confirmed were caused by radioactivity on the job, are more than enough proof for elected officials to immediately remove special exemptions for oil and gas from hazardous waste laws across the U.S. "The major revelation that virtually every single oil and gas wastewater truck in the Marcellus and Utica shale basins is transporting potentially radioactive material through communities should be met with a halt to the transportation and disposal of wastewater to nonhazardous treatment facilities until it is proven nonhazardous...

WASHINGTON, D.C.

WASHINGTON POST

What does 'dangerous' climate change really mean?

The Energy 202: Youth climate lawsuit dismissal shows challenge of using courts to tackle climate change It was supposed to be the "trial of the century." Now the case won't even get its day in court. The dismissal of a landmark, youth-led climate lawsuit late last week is a sign of how hard it will be to use the courts to solve a problem as big as climate change. That's a wrench in the plans of environmental advocates and their Democratic allies who are frustrated with Congress's failure to pass major climate legislation — and have increasingly turned to the court system to stop what they see as the pressing ecological and economic crisis of rising global temperatures. "From the outset, it was a big ask," said Michael Burger, executive director of Columbia Law School's Sabin Center for Climate Change Law, adding the panel of federal appeals court judges in the case ruled "courts simply do not have it in their power in the United States to command the entire energy system."...

DELAWARE

WILMINGTON NEWS JOURNAL

What's hidden in this Delaware town's groundwater? Contamination, PFAS and health concerns If it really does take decades to remove the toxic chemicals and metals found in one southern Delaware town's groundwater supply, it will be too late for Nancy Sorge. "I'll be dead by then," she said. "But other people won't." Sorge lives in Blades, a tiny town near the former "Nylon Capital of the World" in western Sussex County. Almost two years ago, residents learned that manmade chemicals had found their way into their drinking water, prompting calls for residents to switch to bottled water until officials could install an expensive filtration system. Even though Sorge hasn't lived in Blades for long,

she worries about long-term health effects for her neighbors. Experts aren't yet sure how serious the risks may be or how long the toxic substances were in Blades' drinking water before the new filters, added in 2018, were installed. It's been two decades since the chemicals, known as PFAS, were found polluting water supplies near chemical plants that handled them, like Washington Works in West Virginia. But it was just two years ago that tiny Blades captured headlines across the state. Sorge said bought her house just a few months after the filters were installed but no one told her details about the water situation... If Blades earns Superfund designation, it could one day lead to determining where the contamination came from, hold someone responsible for it, and ultimately, clean the groundwater. The state Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control said it looked to the EPA for assistance in protecting public drinking water wells, over 100 residential wells, surface water, and wetlands surrounding the site that "may have been exposed to electroplating compounds and PFAS," EPA spokesman Jeffrey Landis said in an email. But to local officials, a potential Superfund designation raises concerns in the mostly working-class town...

Delaware's exposure to 'forever' chemicals: Where PFAS have been found, what officials are doing Most commonly known as PFAS, per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances are the potentially harmful "forever" chemicals that have put pressure on major chemical companies and environmental regulators to figure out the consequences of their widespread presence. These man-made chemicals include substances like PFOA or C8, PFOS, and GenX, but there are thousands of different PFAS compounds that have been released into the environment since they first came into use in the 1950s. Popular for their ability to repel water, stains, grease and heat, the chemicals were used in products like Teflon, military-grade firefighting foam, stain-resistant carpeting, cleaning products, clothing and in industrial plating operations. PFAS do not really break down in the environment, and they can build up in the bodies of people or animals that ingest them or are exposed to them. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention asserts that most Americans have been exposed to the chemicals, or have PFOA or PFOS in their blood. Officials insist more studies are needed to understand human health risks. A 2018 study from the same agency acknowledges likely links between human exposure to the chemicals and problems with fertility and pregnancy, liver damage, high cholesterol, thyroid disease, decreased response to vaccines and asthma. Another study cited by the CDC identifies the chemicals as "possibly carcinogenic" to humans, with evidence of "increases in testicular and kidney cancer ... observed in highly exposed humans."...

Delaware officials propose \$50 million investment for clean water needs Contaminated drinking water in Sussex County. Failing wastewater systems in Kent County. Flooded streets in South Wilmington. Those are just a few examples of the water issues faced by Delaware residents, some caused by improper management of resources and others by a lack of funding, or both. After years of trying to pass legislation to create a steady funding stream to start chipping away at old, failing infrastructure and persistent pollution problems, Delaware politicians say they have finally found a way to get started. It's called the Clean Water for Delaware Act, and Gov. John Carney is ready to pour \$50 million into a trust fund to get it rolling in the upcoming fiscal year. "From the Brandywine Creek to the Inland Bays, we have special natural places in our state. Water is Delaware's most basic and valuable resource, and we should protect that resource for future generations," Carney said in a press release Tuesday. "And we need to make sure that all Delaware families have access to clean drinking water. Delawareans deserve clean water. It's as simple as that." The bill, which needs to be approved by the Legislature, aims to address drinking water, wastewater and drainage needs. That could include funding millions of dollars' worth of infrastructure-related projects or smaller-scale projects for individual communities, officials say. .. Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control Secretary Shawn Garvin pointed to potential projects, like rehabilitation of the Delaware City wastewater treatment plant and sewer expansions in Kent County. He also noted the severe drainage and flooding issues in the Sussex County community of Oak Orchard, which could benefit. It also makes it easier for low-income, under served communities to access the funding. Previously, neighborhoods or small communities that suffered from issues like failing septic systems, which can pollute nearby drinking water wells, may not have had the resources to apply for state or federal grants or loans. "For 30 years, everybody's been saying we have to figure out how to address these communities," Garvin said. "This bill is going to underscore that effort."

DELAWARE CAPE GAZETTE

Commentary: Climate change: The time to act is now (By U.S. Sen. Chris Coons) As the lowest-lying state in the country, Delaware - and Sussex County, in particular - is on the front lines of dealing with climate change, and as Delaware farmers, local business leaders and homeowners will tell you, the effects of climate change don't discriminate between Republicans, Independents and Democrats. Climate change impacts all of us - so we should all be working together to address it. That's not the way folks in Washington approach most issues, but in Sussex County, I've found that people

know problems are best solved with cooperation, and that's the approach I'm trying to take to address climate change in the U.S. Senate. Last fall, I founded the bipartisan Senate Climate Solutions Caucus with Republican Sen. Mike Braun from Indiana. The idea behind it is simple: We both know that climate change is real and that it's already impacting every state in the country, so it's time for Republicans and Democrats to work together and do something about it.... The bottom line is this: We can't wait any longer to address climate change, and we can - and should - do it in a bipartisan way. Increasingly severe and unpredictable weather has created real challenges for our farmers, who are already strained by low commodity prices and ongoing trade disputes. Changing weather patterns and rising sea levels also pose serious threats to our homes, local businesses and transportation infrastructure. Thousands of properties in Southern Delaware are highly susceptible to chronic flooding in the near future, many of which are many miles from our coastline. Addressing climate change doesn't have to be another partisan political battle. I view it as an opportunity for us to show what we're capable of by working together, finding solutions, and getting things done. We can do it, but the time to act is now.

Chief of staff named for DNREC Office of the Secretary Secretary Shawn M. Garvin has announced that the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control will welcome a new chief of staff to the DNREC Secretary's office Jan. 27: Gregory Patterson, who brings with him extensive experience in the fields of communications, government, and the environment, having served in three Delaware administrations. Most recently, Patterson served as chief of staff in the Department of Justice under Delaware Attorneys General Kathy Jennings and Matt Denn, directing policy, communications, and legislative relations. Prior to that, he served as the senior government relations director in Delaware for the law firm Drinker Biddle, where he worked on behalf of clients including St. Francis Hospital and AstraZeneca...

Letter: Environmentalists support offshore wind power The proposal to develop an offshore wind energy project in the Atlantic Ocean off Ocean City could have significantly more benefits to the town of Ocean City than drawbacks. At 17 miles offshore, the 30 wind turbines will barely be discernable from the beach, especially during warm summer months when moisture-saturated air substantially limits distance viewing. Of far greater concern for Ocean City are the long-term impacts of sea level rise. With passions running high, it is important to take a broader and more balanced approach to this form of clean energy. The transition off fossil fuels is becoming increasingly urgent as sea level rise, driven by climate change, is already being felt by the resort, especially on its beleaguered bayside flank...

MERR opposes offshore wind farm The urgency to move toward sustainable energy sources has never been more urgent than it is at this time. Consumer use of fossil fuels has created a warming climate that is threatening the survival of many species and the environment as a whole. As we navigate toward sustainable energy solutions, we need to exercise caution in the choices we support, and apprise ourselves of the most current information regarding these choices. As defenders of marine life and ocean habitat, the Marine Education, Research & Rehabilitation Institute views offshore wind farms as a detrimental choice amongst fossil fuel alternatives because the adverse impacts on wildlife are so substantive, and empirical data on the risks to the marine environment is lacking and/or incomplete. The Delaware Bay and coastline provide essential habitat for migrating whales, shorebirds, and butterflies as well as providing foraging grounds for sea turtles, birthing and feeding grounds for bottlenose and other dolphin species, and winter habitat for seals... We urge decision makers not to rush toward an alternative energy system that has not been adequately researched for long-term impacts, and in the short term is proven to be detrimental to many species of wildlife, ecosystems, and neighboring communities. There is no need to accept the lesser of the evils when we have access to existing, far less detrimental forms of sustainable energy and systems, such as solar, geothermal, and net-zero housing. These far-reaching decisions should not be based upon the financial incentives provided by utility companies but rather on the best interests of marine ecosystem conservation and the welfare of coastal communities.

Rehoboth's canal dock hits roadblock Higher-than-expected bid proposals have forced a delay on the proposed Lewes-Rehoboth Canal access dock in Rehoboth Beach. Rehoboth commissioners were scheduled to vote to award the contract for the project during their Jan. 17 meeting. That didn't happen because bids opened Jan. 8 came in too high and the vote was removed from the meeting agenda...

DELAWARE PUBLIC MEDIA (NPR)

Gov. Carney pitches clean water funding Gov. John Carney (D-Delaware) wants to devote money in next year's budget for clean water legislation. "We're going to propose \$50 million for water and wastewater and drainage facilities in our

state," said Carney. Carney made the announcement Tuesday afternoon surrounded by members of the General Assembly from both parties, cabinet members, advocates, and others. House Bill 200 would create the Clean Water Trust account that will use the proposed funding to provide grants to low-income and underserved communities. Carney adds the new money will join to state dollars already allocated, and create more funding opportunities as well. "That will add to the \$20 million that we all together appropriated this year in the Bond Bill," said Carney. "The \$50 million will leverage another 30 million of federal money, [and] the 20 million, that will leverage another \$20 million of federal money and that doesn't even include some of the drainage and Beach replenishment resources that we have." Carney adds recent budgeting practices allow the state to tackle big projects like this. "The approach to our budgeting today enables us and, in fact, incentivizes us to continue to make investments in these facilities in the out years as we hold ourselves to a sustainable operating budget growth venues and use revenue above that for just these kind of life-saving purposes," said Carney. House Majority Leader Valerie Longhurst (D-Bear) is co-sponsoring the legislation to create the Clean Water Trust. "Clean water - it's not a privilege, it's a human right," said Longhurst. "Access to clean water and infrastructure is so important and it impacts all Delawareans. HB 200 - the Clean Water Act - is a monumental piece of legislation. Today after years of advocacy we are finally making the Clean Water Act a priority." The money will allow the state to improve resiliency and drainage in the most flood-prone communities, repair failing sewer pipes and sewer systems, improve the drinking water quality, expand access to safe drinking water, and remove legacy pollution from Delaware's waterways.

Delaware spends \$2.6 mil to expand state park The Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (DNREC) recently added 32 acres to White Clay Creek State Park in Newark. It purchased the land from a private landowner with about \$2.6 million from the Delaware Open Space Program (OSP). State Parks Director Ray Bivens says it's the largest addition to the park since 2003. "It's certainly land that was highly developable," said Bivens. "The landowner had passed up on larger offers than the state was able to make which we greatly appreciate. They wanted to [sic] have it be part of the park." The state has spent nearly \$62 million to add more than 2,200 acres to White Clay Creek State Park since 1988 when OSP was started. The latest addition is heavily wooded and extends the park's footprint along Route 896 near Krantz Hill Farm. "It kind of creates our southern border at the park right now. That's the main reason," said Bivens. "We knew that if it was ever developed we'd never have that opportunity again." Bivens says the new area will soon be evaluated for invasive species. The move to buy the land came shortly before DNREC announced its new park superintendent, Laura Lee. Lee began working for State Parks in 1991 and was previously superintendent of Auburn Valley State Park. "Anytime we can add a piece of adjacent land that's very important to the natural resource, because habitat fragmentation is a chronic problem in many areas," she said.

Public workshop to discuss latest Rehoboth streetscape project Rehoboth Beach residents are invited to learn more about an upcoming streetscaping project. A workshop next week will offer information about Phase II of the Lake Avenue Streetscape Improvements Project, providing the public an opportunity to review and discuss the plans. "We have a section of Lake Avenue that we did a streetscape on a couple of years ago (2017) - it looks very nice. So this is a follow-up phase to that to extend it," said Kevin Williams, public works director for the City of Rehoboth. He says the project includes enhancements along Olive Avenue and Maryland Avenue from Third Street to Second Street and Second Street from Olive Avenue to Rehoboth Avenue. "It will improve the stormwater infrastructure. It will resurface the roads. It will re-adjust some of that island in the middle of Olive and Maryland Avenues so it becomes safer for both vehicles and pedestrians," Williams said...

DELAWARE BUSINESS NOW

EPA, Delaware Dept. of Agriculture sign partnership agreement The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Delaware Department of Agriculture signed a five-year Memorandum of Understanding. EPA Mid-Atlantic Regional Administrator Cosmo Servidio and Delaware Agriculture Secretary Michael Scuse signed the agreement at the Delaware State Fairgrounds in Harrington as part of Delaware Agriculture Week. The agreement formalizes a partnership between the two agencies and expands activities to prioritize funding, coordinate on regulatory issues, recognize farmers for environmental stewardship, and provide educational opportunities for producers. "This agreement builds on the actions our agencies are taking together and with the broader agricultural community to promote a vibrant farm economy and clean rivers and streams," said Servidio. "It is only fitting that the first MOU EPA is signing with a state agriculture department is in the First State."...

WDEL RADIO

Tainted tap water: New report finds alarmingly high levels of PFAS chemicals in water supply A new report by the Environmental Working Group finds alarmingly high levels of contamination in public drinking water supplies in several major cities, including Philadelphia. A recent series, "Fighting Fire with Fire" on WDEL highlighted the chemicals' presence in military firefighting foam and firefighters' gear -- and now this report released Wednesday, January 22, 2020 -- finds the chemicals at much higher-than-previously reported levels. Volunteers and staffers from EWG sampled tap water from 44 cities and towns in 31 states and Washington, D.C. between May and December of 2019. Those samples were then tested by an independent lab for 30 different PFAS chemicals. Other locations with high levels of contaminated drinking included Miami, New Orleans, and northern New Jersey. EWG's testing also identified the chemicals in 34 locations, where it claims prior, limited Environmental Protection Agency testing did not. "Our results are meant to highlight the ubiquity of PFAS and the vulnerability of the nation's drinking water supply to PFAS contamination," said spokeswoman Monica Amarelo. The federal lifetime health advisory for PFAS and PFOA chemicals in drinking water is 70 parts per trillion. But EWG's tests found 186 parts per trillion in the water supply in Brunswick County, North Carolina. Among cities tested, only Meridian, Mississippi saw no detectable contamination. It draws its drinking water from wells more than 700 ft. deep...

WEST VIRGINIA

BLOOMBERG ENVIRONMENT

West Virginia Moves to Speed Horizontal Drilling West Virginia oil and gas producers could get quicker action on their horizontal drilling permits under a bill advancing in the Legislature. The state House of Delegates has unanimously approved H.B. 4091, which would speed permit processing for a higher fee. Lawmakers failed to enact a similar measure last year, but industry representatives say this time could be different. Charlie Burd, executive director of the Independent Oil and Gas Association of West Virginia, said last year's version got hung up when the House tinkered with a fee structure. But the chamber didn't make those revisions this time, he said. The Senate is expected to take up the bill soon. West Virginia's session ends March 7. H.B. 4091, which was approved Monday, would allow applicants to pay \$20,000 on top of their \$10,000 regular fee covering horizontal well drilling for a decision to be made on their permit within 45 days. Another \$10,000 would be required for each other well drilled from the same pad, in addition to the usual \$5,000 per-well fee. Half of the money generated would be used to pay staff to handle the expedited reviews, while the other half would go toward plugging abandoned wells...

WEST VIRGINIA PUBLIC BROADCASTING

Advocates Weigh In On How To Protect Environment, Property Rights As Natural Gas Grows We begin a two-part series on West Virginia's energy sectors. West Virginia Public Broadcasting's energy and environment reporter Brittany Patterson looks at the forecast for oil and natural gas production and includes perspective from environmentalists and private property owners. Also, host Suzanne Higgins speaks with statehouse reporter Emily Allen for the latest in legislative action. In 2019, oil and gas production in West Virginia was up. But severance collections were down -- affected by low natural gas prices and the slowdown of pipeline projects. Meanwhile, state economic developers continue to push for expansion, especially in related downstream industries. Brittany Patterson spoke with West Virginia University students to learn about their view of the industry's future.

House Passes Bill To Speed Up Post-Disaster Construction Process The West Virginia House of Delegates unanimously passed a bill Tuesday, Jan. 21, from members of its interim committee on flooding, hoping to speed up the process for rebuilding homes after natural disasters. House Bill 4130 from delegates Dean Jeffries, D-Kanawha, and Caleb Hanna, R-Nicholas, amends a part of state code making it difficult for the state to hire contractors for multiple approved construction projects at once. Hanna and Jeffries serve on the joint House and Senate flood committee that was formed following flooding in 2016 that devastated many communities in southern West Virginia. A lot of the reconstruction the

group deals with now is related to the RISE program, which uses federal money to rebuild some of the thousands of structures that the flood destroyed. The National Guard has been in charge of the RISE program since Gov. Jim Justice asked then-Secretary of Commerce Woody Thrasher, who used to lead the program, to resign in 2018. According to an update from the Guard on Friday, Jan. 17, there were 108 homes that had been completely rebuilt. There are 67 homes under construction now by four different contractors. RISE covers 376 cases total. There are 88 left waiting on bids, or they're being assessed. The West Virginia Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters (VOAD), meanwhile, works with the cases that the National Guard has deemed ineligible. According to the National Guard, VOAD has reviewed 650 cases and they've helped the National Guard accept or re-open 60 of them...

What Do You Wonder About Energy Policy In West Virginia? Submit Your Question This year at the Legislature, energy and environment issues will no doubt be hot topics of debate. From water quality regulations to natural gas to the state's coal industry — tell us what YOU want to know more about. Your question might be selected as the topic of a news report during this legislative session...

Could West Virginia Be Self-Sustaining? On this West Virginia Morning, as part of our occasional series "Wild, Wondering, West Virginia," Lana Lester, of Wyoming County, submitted this question to Inside Appalachia: "Could West Virginia Be Self-Sustaining?" She said she, "always had the feeling that God Blessed West Virginia with all of our natural resources, and we have everything there in the state to survive." ...

MARYLAND

GRIST

The Plan To Protect The Chesapeake Bay is Failing, And It's Pennsylvania's Fault In early January, members of the Chesapeake Bay Commission sat in a gray conference room in Annapolis, Maryland, for a routine meeting. The 21-member legislative body, with representatives from Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Maryland, convenes regularly to coordinate interstate efforts to restore and protect the Chesapeake Bay. But as the meeting drew to a close, EPA Chesapeake Bay Program director Dana Aunkst got up and delivered a demoralizing message to the group. "The TMDL itself is not enforceable," he said. He was referring to the Total Maximum Daily Load, a set of science-based limits for three pollutants — nitrogen, phosphorous, and sediment — flowing into the bay. The states in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed have agreed to achieve the TMDL by 2025, and the EPA committed to enforcing it under the terms of a 2010 settlement. But Aunkst went on to describe the TMDL as merely "an informational document" that was "aspirational." Aunkst's comments were jarring to some in the room, but they weren't entirely out of left field. Pennsylvania, by far the largest source of pollution entering the Chesapeake Bay Watershed, has failed to meet its pollution reduction benchmarks for years, with little response from the EPA. This single state's negligence threatens the success of the entire regional program. The Chesapeake is the largest estuary in the United States, a nationally significant economic resource, and a crucial habitat for thousands of species. But the influx of pollution from upstream sources has led to fishery declines, recurring "dead zones" where pollutants starve aquatic animals of oxygen, and regular algae blooms that suffocate underwater plant life. Even after nearly 10 years of strategic planning and implementation of these pollution reduction plans by neighboring states, its overall health is still poor. And Pennsylvania seems increasingly to blame. ...

BALTIMORE SUN

A Trump administration ruling could squash Maryland's renewable energy efforts, regulators say in appeal Maryland is challenging a Trump administration ruling that officials say could hinder the state's efforts to expand renewable energy generation. The Maryland Public Service Commission has asked federal regulators to reconsider a December decision that effectively raises the cost of solar, wind and other renewable energy that receives state subsidies, making it easier for fossil fuels to compete. The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission ruling applies to PJM Interconnection, the power grid that covers Maryland, 12 other states and the District of Columbia. The ruling infringes on the state's right to ensure it can keep the lights on under energy and environmental policies as it sees fit, said Jason Stanek, chairman of the Public Service Commission. Maryland and many other states in PJM and across the country subsidize renewable energy to help

it compete with coal, gas and other fossil fuels, aiming to speed adoption of the technology and drive down greenhouse gas emissions. Stanek said the federal commission's decision could effectively bar solar and wind farms from participating in PJM's regular auctions. In the auctions, power plants are paid upfront for promises to help the grid meet power needs three years in the future, and the cheapest bids win. The federal ruling could take away much of the economic advantage renewable energy providers enjoy in those auctions because of state subsidies...

CHESAPEAKE BAY JOURNAL

PA sets lofty goals for climate action, but can it achieve them? Pennsylvania, which ranks fourth in the nation in its emissions of climate-altering carbon dioxide, took a much bolder stance in addressing climate change in 2019, at least in words. Democratic Gov. Tom Wolf unveiled four separate actions aimed at curbing climate change, each bolder than the one before. Wolf started off in January 2019 by issuing an executive order that set the first statewide goal for greenhouse gas reductions. The target is a 26% reduction by 2025 and an 80% decrease by 2050 from 2005 levels. The primary means to achieve those scalebacks: more energy-efficient government buildings, switching a quarter of the government fleet of vehicles to electric or hybrid models by 2025, and requiring that at least 40% of the energy used in the state come from renewable sources, listed as natural gas, wind and solar. Wolf called climate change "the most critical environmental threat facing the world." The state's temperatures have risen nearly 2 degrees since the early 1900s and nearly 4 degrees in winter, according to state agencies. Officials warn of sea level rise, hotter summer temperatures, increased flooding, more extreme storms and more unhealthy air over the next century if greenhouse gases are not curtailed. Though Pennsylvania is not an oceanfront state, there are concerns about how the tidal Delaware River will affect the vast industrial complex along the river around Philadelphia, including fears that runways at the Philadelphia International Airport will flood...

MD, VA mulling options to halt decline in striped bass population Anglers who live for hooking a feisty striped bass are going to have fewer chances to do it in 2020 — and probably for at least a year or two afterward. Prompted by a scientific finding that the East Coast's most prized finfish are in trouble, Maryland, Virginia and the Potomac River are all moving to adopt new catch restrictions aimed at stemming the species' decline. But many anglers are complaining about the complexity, fairness and even the adequacy of the cutbacks under consideration, which range from a quota tuck of less than 2% for commercial fishermen in Maryland to a 24% reduction in fish removed by recreational anglers in Virginia. The two states are taking somewhat different tacks to comply with a directive from the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, which regulates fishing for migratory species from Maine to Florida. Last October, the interstate panel ordered an 18% decrease in mortality of striped bass coastwide, including in the Chesapeake Bay, which serves as the main spawning ground and nursery for the species. Striped bass aren't in as bad a shape as they were in the 1980s, when Maryland imposed a total fishing moratorium on them for nearly six years. But scientists have warned that after rebounding from that earlier swoon, the number of spawning-age female fish has fallen once more to a worrisome level, and the species is again being overfished...

CHESAPEAKE BAY MAGAZINE

Oyster Recovery Partnership Sets Shell-Recycling Record The Oyster Recovery Partnership—a grassroots organization devoted to saving the Bay's dwindling oyster population—just keeps growing. And this week, the partnership (ORP) announced that 2019 was a record-breaking year for oyster-shell recycling. ORP's Shell Recycling Alliance collects used shell from restaurants, seafood businesses, community events, and neighborhood drop boxes. The group weathers and washes the old shell, then plants it with oyster larvae to foster baby oysters destined for protected Bay sanctuaries. In 2019, the Shell Recycling Alliance collected 36,000 bushels (or 1,250 tons) of oyster shell. That much shell could potentially house 180 million oyster spat. In addition to the hard-working folks at ORP, we have businesses and citizens from Virginia to Pennsylvania to thank for the recycling record. ORP just shared the list of top recyclers for 2019 exclusively with *Bay Bulletin*. Wholesaler Congressional Seafood, of Jessup, Maryland topped the list, with D.C.'s Old Ebbitt Grill in second and The Walrus Oyster & Ale House in National Harbor taking third (Find the full top-ten list at the bottom of this story, including spots in Baltimore and Annapolis.) Other sources of shell recycling growth are the reopening of Washington, D.C.'s District Wharf development. Even Pittsburgh is a big contributor, ORP tells us. The unsung heroes are the volunteers who bring their oyster roast discards to dropoff points, or canvas restaurants outside the Alliance's typical range. "Overall, I'd say we can attribute the record-breaking year to increased awareness about the important role these shell play in creating water-filtering oyster reefs. Bay area businesses and residents recognize

the ecological value of oysters and sincerely desire to do their part to help," says ORP spokesperson Karis King...

MARTINSVILLE BULLETIN

Leak prompts temporary closures of Memorial Ave. gas station, restaurant A leak discovered in an underground fuel holding tank has temporarily closed two businesses in Grandin Village. The leak, found at the Pamol Mart gas station on Memorial Avenue, has been stopped, but additional remediation work will likely be needed, said Roanoke Fire Chief David Hoback. The Pamol Mart, an Exxon gas station, was closed Monday as a result, as was its nearest neighbor, Scratch Biscuit Co. Scratch's property isn't imperiled by the leak, but a strong odor of gasoline had wafted into its building Sunday. The restaurant contacted authorities that same day, Hoback said, and the fire department traced the source of the odor to the gas station. The gas station emptied the underground tank to halt the leak. Remediation contractors and state authorities are now reviewing the situation to determine cleanup requirements. Scratch planned to remain closed for two or three days to allow time for the odor to fully dissipate. "We just want to err on the side of caution," said restaurant owner Nathan Webster. "We don't want to put our customers or our staff in that atmosphere while they're working." Webster said the biscuit eatery hopes to reopen around Wednesday or Thursday. The Village Grill, located on the other side of Scratch, wasn't affected and remains open for business. The fire department took air readings in the restaurant to ensure conditions were normal...

VIRGINIA

VIRGINIA MERCURY

Why stormwater poses an increasing challenge for Virginia On July 8, as rush hour clogged the roads of Alexandria, a slow-moving southbound storm caused a deluge of rain to fall over the city. And fall. And fall. And fall. All throughout the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area, precipitation and flood records were shattered. By the end of a single hour, 3.44 inches of rain had been recorded at Reagan National Airport just north of Alexandria. The downpour caused the Potomac and creeks all over the region to breach their banks, sending floodwaters into streets and yards and parking lots. At the U.S. Geological Survey flood gauge at Cameron Run, a stream running along the city's southern border, water levels reached almost 16 feet — well over the flood stage set by the agency. The record-breaking rain was an aberration, the kind of weather event no municipal drainage system is designed to handle. As Jesse Maines, chief of Alexandria's stormwater management division and a member of the board of the Virginia Municipal Stormwater Association, noted, "You don't build the church for Easter Sunday." But it also revealed exactly why Virginia lawmakers have increasingly become concerned with stormwater and the challenges it poses on both a state and local level. It's not the most glamorous or flashy of the political issues the General Assembly will be taking up this session. But to see how it impacts every resident of Virginia, just look out the window the next time it rains.

VIRGINIA PUBLIC RADIO

Glowing Oysters may be a New Weapon Against Poaching Around the Chesapeake Bay Wild oyster sanctuaries are being built all around the Chesapeake Bay. The goal is to give the bivalves a fighting chance since about 99 percent of the population has disappeared over the last century, mostly from over-harvesting, pollution and disease. To ensure their survival, scientists are devising a very unusual way to track them. The demonstrations scientist Jason Spires gives to visitors at a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration lab in Maryland tend to get more oohs and ahhs than the presentations of his colleagues. "Because they're showing them posters describing their research or computer models. And I'm putting live oysters in people's hands and turning the lights out and they glow in the dark," Spires explains. Marine researchers tag species like sharks and striped bass to collect data. It's also been tried with limited success with blue crabs before they molt their hard shells. "If you are a fisherman, if you are an outdoors person if you are a hunter you have heard of organisms being tagged. People catch fish with tags in them, people shoot ducks with bands on their feet." ...

The Carbon Tax That Pays YOU A recent study found Americans loathe the word tax. But what if there were a tax that's actually pays dividends to people? That's the idea behind the new and improved Carbon Pricing Bill that supporters

hope will become law. Ingrid Mans is a co-founder of the New River Valley Chapter of the Citizens Climate Lobby. "Citizens all around the world are lobbying their federal governments to put a meaningful price on carbon," she says the goal is to "put a halt on emissions and return all of the revenue, equally and fully, out to the people." CCL is working to get a carbon pricing bill --OK, let's call it what it is, a Carbon Tax Bill, --passed by Congress. But this tax would be paid to you. It would put a price on carbon, starting at about \$15 a ton and increase gradually every year. "And then all that money is returned back to households equally divided, so that the regular folks aren't harmed by the rising cost of living, typically associated with their carbon tax" says Mans. CCL has created a carbon calculator anyone can use, "where people can enter their zip code, what kind of electricity they use, and you know, household size. And it would predict for you what your impact would be on the first year of this carbon fee and dividend. So, it would estimate what your rise in costs would be compared with what your dividend check." Mans did the math and she found two thirds of households either break even or come out ahead with a carbon tax. The lower your income, the higher your carbon tax return, and vice versa. ... because higher income often also means, larger carbon footprint, --- bigger houses, more cars, -- so the less carbon you create the more money you get...

Lake Anna Begs State Help to Control Algae It's the off season for this state's second largest lake, and residents are using their free time to lobby the legislature. They want a study and a solution to the algae problem that has plagued Lake Anna for the last two years. Lake Anna is a popular spot for water skiing, fishing and swimming. Created in the late 60's to serve the North Anna Nuclear Plant, it's 17 miles long and fairly shallow, so when hot weather hits, it's prone to grow algae that can -- at first -- cause rashes and intestinal problems, but when algae dies it can create a toxin that may cause long-term liver and kidney problems. Greg Baker, president of the Lake Anna Civic Association, says that's when the state steps in. "The Virginia Department of Health will issue no swim advisories," he explains. "For a good half of the lake in the last two years we've suffered from having no swim advisories and not been able to use the water with confidence." "It is still safe to boat and fish," he says, "but clearly if you've come to the lake with your family, and you want to swim and water ski, having a no swim advisory puts a damper on the party." The solution, he explains, is to rid the lake of phosphorous and nitrates that promote algae growth. "We need to do things like fence cattle out from the water streams. We need to, as homeowners, make sure our septic systems are pumped, avoid fertilizing. We want to keep from blowing leaves in the lake and grass clippings that are going to deteriorate and release the phosphorous." But Baker wants a detailed plan to eliminate the algae -- possibly calling for creation of new wetlands. "One of the best solutions for long-term treatment of algae is damming the creeks that come in, letting that water flood and planting lily pads and other things that will compete for the nutrients -- act as a natural filtration, and it's been one of the most successful solutions to controlling algae," Baker says...

ASSOCIATED PRESS (Va.)

Virginia Senate panel OKs offshore drilling, fracking bans RICHMOND, Va. — A Virginia Senate committee on Tuesday advanced measures that would ban offshore drilling as well as hydraulic fracturing in much of eastern Virginia. Similar versions of both measures have been proposed in previous years but died in what was then a Republican-controlled General Assembly. Democrats who took control of both chambers of the legislature in November's elections have pledged to enact stricter environmental laws. "I think elections have consequences, and one of the consequences is a cleaner environment for Virginia," Michael Town, executive director of the Virginia League of Conservation Voters, said after the votes. The Senate Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Natural Resources approved Democratic Sen. Scott Surovell's measure prohibiting hydraulic fracturing — or fracking — in the Eastern Virginia Groundwater Management Area on a 10-5 vote. Fracking is a technique that allows energy companies to extract huge volumes of oil and gas from shale rock deep underground. It involves injecting high-pressure mixtures of water, sand or gravel and chemicals into rock. Fracking opponents say the chemicals involved threaten water supplies and public health. Surovell sponsored a similar bill two years ago. It died in a committee on a tied vote. He said that the bill was necessary to protect the Potomac Aquifer, a drinking water source for millions of Virginians, because a company has signed leases to frack in the Taylorsville Basin. Surovell also said he wants to prevent any other company that might seek to acquire a lease. Environmental advocates urged lawmakers to pass the bill. Representatives of the Virginia Petroleum Council and the Virginia Oil and Gas Association were the only speakers to oppose it, arguing it was unnecessary and that fracking can be conducted safely.

MISCELLANEOUS

GOVERNMENT EXECUTIVE

Career Employees Allege EPA Leaders Silenced Them on Key Deregulation Effort The Environmental Protection Agency suppressed the work of its career employees and dismissed legitimate science in taking a key deregulatory action, dozens of former and current employees have alleged. The employees are asking investigators to discipline the top officials responsible. The complaint, issued by the nonprofit advocacy group Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility, concerned orders from EPA's top brass during its process of repealing the Waters of the United States rule implemented during the Obama administration. The current and former employees, made up mostly of EPA staff but also of Army Corps of Engineers and Fish and Wildlife Service workers, called on the EPA inspector general and scientific integrity officer to launch investigations and hold the political appointees accountable. They named EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler and a half-dozen top officials in the agency's offices of Water and General Counsel in their complaint. The complainants said political leadership consistently violated provisions of EPA's Scientific Integrity Policy throughout the deregulatory process. That included when career employees were "explicitly cautioned" not to provide formal comments on the rule that would then become part of its docket, resulting in those comments "being withheld from the public." This also violated a provision of the integrity policy that prohibits leadership from "intimidating or coercing scientists to alter scientific data, findings or professional opinions," PEER wrote on behalf of the former and current employees...

BLOOMBERG ENVIRONMENT

DuPont PFAS Cancer Case Opens in Ohio Federal Court Opening arguments are expected to start today in an Ohio federal courtroom over whether DuPont caused cancer in two people because of PFAS contamination. One potential juror was booted from the trial in yesterday—in part because he saw the movie trailer for "Dark Waters," a film that portrays one lawyer's struggle to bring suits against DuPont for chemical contamination, Alex Ebert writes. The case is being heard in the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Ohio. In "Dark Waters," a legal thriller, Mark Ruffalo plays Robert Bilott, a Cincinnati lawyer who is one of the plaintiff attorneys leading the multidistrict litigation against the DuPont. Bilott struggled for years to bring light to the issue of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) contamination. The trial centers on allegations perfluorooctanoic acid, or PFOA, a type of PFAS, from an E. I. du Pont de Nemours and Company (DuPont) plant in West Virginia caused the kidney cancer of Angela Swartz and the testicular cancer of Travis Abbott...

Industry Won't Challenge Court Ruling Upholding Ozone Limits The Obama-era ozone limits will remain in place now that a U.S. Chamber of Commerce-led coalition of energy and manufacturing companies have decided against challenging a federal appeals court ruling that largely upheld them. Jan. 17 was the last opportunity for the coalition to petition the U.S. Supreme Court to review the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit's August ruling in *Murray Energy v. EPA*, which essentially rebuffed the coalition's argument that the 2015 ozone limits of 70 parts per billion were too stringent. "We did not file a cert petition," Dan Byers, vice president for policy with the Chamber of Commerce's Global Energy Institute, told Bloomberg Environment on Tuesday. The chamber-led coalition, along with the American Petroleum Institute, American Fuel & Petrochemical Manufacturers, and the National Association of Manufacturers, had asked Supreme Court Chief Justice John Roberts in November for more time to file a petition against the D.C. Circuit's ruling. Roberts granted an extension to Jan. 17. The industry groups argued that the pollution standards to protect public health should be relaxed to account for "background ozone" that drifts across borders or forms from natural sources. They also contended that the Environmental Protection Agency should have considered "adverse economic, social, and energy impacts" when crafting the measures. They said the D.C. Circuit ruling on the background effects and the adverse economic impacts raised important questions about the reach of the Clean Air Act. The D.C. Circuit had rejected both arguments in its August ruling, making it clear that the EPA must weigh health issues in setting air standards, and is barred by the Clean Air Act from using energy impacts, costs to businesses, and other factors like wildfires to set or modify air limits. Byers didn't say why the groups decided not to pursue a challenge. The industry's decision to not challenge the D.C. Circuit ruling comes as the EPA is working with its science advisers to

finish its review of the National Ambient Air Quality Standards for ozone by the end of 2020....

EPA Advisers Try to Soften Tone of 'Secret Science' Report The EPA's science advisers on Tuesday debated toning down the language of a draft report to agency chief Andrew Wheeler that finds flaws in the EPA's proposed "secret science" rule. The proposed rule (RIN:2080-AA14) would bar the agency from using scientific research that isn't or can't be made public. Critics have said the proposal is a bid to sideline the science the Environmental Protection Agency uses in regulations, because the agency wouldn't be able to rely on epidemiological studies, which often draw on private medical information. In some cases, the advisers' tweaks can be seen as attempts to preserve the Science Advisory Board's status as an impartial, science-based body. But others reflect genuine objections to the report, and at least some support for the EPA's justification that the rule is simply an effort to make its science more transparent and reproducible by others. In any case, the board meeting only slightly nudged forward the formal objections to the rulemaking. The EPA isn't required to take the board's recommendations, and the board has complained that Wheeler ignores its work...

GREENWIRE / E&E NEWS

Justice Department seeks dismissal of WOTUS lawsuit The Department of Justice is asking a federal judge to dismiss a lawsuit brought by environmental groups challenging the repeal of an Obama-era rule that sought to clarify which wetlands and waterways are protected by the Clean Water Act. The Trump administration finalized its repeal of the 2015 Clean Water Rule, also known as Waters of the U.S., or WOTUS, rule this fall, and the move was immediately challenged by the South Carolina Coastal Conservation League, Natural Resources Defense Council and Southern Environmental Law Center in the U.S. District Court for the District of South Carolina. The groups allege that the repeal was "arbitrary and unlawful" and did not follow the Administrative Procedure Act, which governs federal rulemaking. But DOJ is arguing in its motion to dismiss that the groups don't have standing to sue, in part because they cannot prove that pollution will occur as the result of the rule change. "The harms they allege, such as loss of recreational, commercial and consumptive uses of waters, are speculative — not imminent or concrete," the motion says. "They also have not pointed to any planned or even proposed discharges of pollutants into those unidentified waters that would result in the feared harms." DOJ also argues that if the court does not want to dismiss the case, it should put it on hold, because the Trump administration is set to finalize its own definition of WOTUS this month...

Advisory panel schedules public call on ozone review Working in haste, a divided EPA advisory panel will hold a two-day teleconference next month geared to taking final action on its recommendations on the agency's ground-level ozone standards. The Clean Air Scientific Advisory Committee will hold the public call Feb. 11 and 12, according to a newly posted agenda. The call will be a follow-up to a December meeting at which the seven-member committee voted 6-1 to keep the primary ozone standard, set in 2015 and geared to protect public health, at its current limit of 70 parts per billion. With no dissent, the panel also agreed to leave the secondary standard, intended in part to safeguard crops and animals, also unchanged at 70 ppb. Ozone, the main ingredient in smog, is a lung irritant linked to asthma attacks in children and worsened breathing problems for people with emphysema and other chronic respiratory ailments. It's one of a half-dozen pollutants covered by National Ambient Air Quality Standards that EPA is supposed to periodically review in light of the latest research on health and environmental effects...

Climate: Trump promotes tree planting, slams 'alarmists' President Trump committed the United States to participate in the "One Trillion Trees" climate change initiative, while slamming "alarmists" predicting disastrous effects from warming. The tree program was launched at the annual World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, where world leaders focused on sustainability and Trump gave his remarks. "We will continue to restore strong leadership in restoring, growing and better managing our trees and our forest," Trump said, without giving specifics. "We're committed to conserving the majesty of God's creation and the natural beauty of our world," said the president. Trees can sequester carbon dioxide and clean air pollution, among other benefits. House Republicans working on their own plans to address climate change will also rely on tree planting. Rep. Bruce Westerman (R-Ark.) is preparing legislation on the issue. Last week, a bipartisan group of lawmakers proposed promoting tree planting through the Department of Energy. Trump — who has argued at various times that the climate is not changing, that it might change back or that human activity is not a major cause — quickly turned to criticizing "prophets of doom" and "alarmists," without specifically mentioning global warming. "To embrace the possibilities of tomorrow, we must reject the perennial prophets of doom and their predictions of the apocalypse. They are the heirs of yesterday's foolish fortune tellers — and I have them, and you have them, and we all have them — and they want to see us do badly, but we don't let that

happen," he told the gathering, which included Swedish activist Greta Thunberg...

Hazardous waste: Vaping: Environmental threat, recycling headache When researcher Jeremiah Mock started picking up e-cigarette and tobacco litter in a San Francisco Bay Area high school, he couldn't believe the number of products he found from e-cig maker Juul. "To my surprise and shock, I found Juul pods and Juul caps in the student parking lot area all over the place," he said, "and not very much other trash and very few cigarette butts." Mock, a health anthropologist specializing in tobacco control at the University of California, San Francisco, was acting on a tip from a student when he began his investigation. Kids are vaping everywhere, the student told Mock. Youth vaping has skyrocketed in recent years. In 2018, about 20% of U.S. high schoolers used e-cigarettes, up from about 12% the previous year, according to a National Institutes of Health study. In response to a growing number of vaping-related illnesses, the Food and Drug Administration recently banned most flavored e-cigarette cartridges. The rise in vaping has given way to a new set of environmental issues: plastic "cigarette butt" litter that does not degrade and other e-cigarette parts that are considered hazardous waste pose complicated cleanup quandaries...

Interior preps nearly 100 policy changes for 2020 As President Trump enters the final year of his first term in office, the Interior Department is pressing to complete work on dozens of policy changes. They range from oil and gas exploration in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to the designation of new snowmobile routes in northern Michigan, according to a new analysis out today. The report, compiled by the Denver-based Center for Western Priorities, details 74 policy proposals — largely focused on land management issues — as well as another 17 actions tied to the Endangered Species Act. The environmental group announced it plans to monitor progress of the proposals via its "Unfinished Business" monitor on the website Medium. The report includes policy proposals listed on the Office of Management and Budget's federal rule tracking website, as well as those proposed on Regulations.gov, secretarial orders and the Bureau of Land Management's E-Planning website. The list does not include any policy changes proposed within the Bureau of Indian Affairs. "The clock is ticking on the Trump administration's first term, and Interior Secretary [David] Bernhardt knows it," said Center for Western Priorities Policy Director Jesse Prentice-Dunn. "Policy changes in the works show that the former oil lobbyist is doing everything in his power to expand drilling and mining while reducing protections for wildlife. ..."

Wetlands: Conservation program marks 30 years, over \$6B in grants The conservation grant program that has helped preserve and restore nearly 30 million acres of wetlands across the continent has turned 30. President George H.W. Bush signed the North American Wetlands Conservation Act into law in December 1989, establishing the grant program as waterfowl populations declined because of habitat loss. "NAWCA has been so critical to waterfowl conservation," said Ducks Unlimited Director of Conservation Operations Craig LeSchack. LeSchack has been working on NAWCA-related issues for 25 of the 30 years the program has been around. He said in addition to waterfowl and migratory birds, fish and other aquatic life also reap the program's benefits. Wetland conservation and restoration improves water quality and quantity. Sediment trapping and other naturally occurring processes in wetlands remove nutrients such as nitrogen and phosphorus, which can cause harmful algae blooms. The result: healthy wetlands that replenish aquifers and ensure future water supplies...

Dems want more time to review NEPA overhaul More than 100 congressional Democrats want the White House to triple the public comment period on the Trump administration's proposal to update National Environmental Policy Act rules. The Council on Environmental Quality proposal has generated a deluge of criticism from environmentalists and Democrats. The changes would streamline environmental reviews for major federal actions on projects like highways, pipelines and transmission lines. Today, House Transportation and Infrastructure Chairman Peter DeFazio (D-Ore.), House Natural Resources Chairman Raúl Grijalva (D-Ariz.) and Senate Environment and Public Works Committee ranking member Tom Carper (D-Del.) led a letter asking for more time for input...

ROLLING STONE MAGAZINE

America's Radioactive Secret - Oil-and-gas wells produce nearly a trillion gallons of toxic waste a year. An investigation shows how it could be making workers sick and contaminating communities across America In 2014, a muscular, middle-aged Ohio man named Peter took a job trucking waste for the oil-and-gas industry. The hours were long — he was out the door by 3 a.m. every morning and not home until well after dark — but the steady \$16-an-hour pay was appealing, says Peter, who asked to use a pseudonym. "This is a poverty area," he says of his home in the state's rural southeast

corner. “Throw a little money at us and by God we’ll jump and take it.” In a squat rig fitted with a 5,000-gallon tank, Peter crisscrosses the expanse of farms and woods near the Ohio/West Virginia/Pennsylvania border, the heart of a region that produces close to one-third of America’s natural gas. He hauls a salty substance called “brine,” a naturally occurring waste product that gushes out of America’s oil-and-gas wells to the tune of nearly 1 trillion gallons a year, enough to flood Manhattan, almost shin-high, every single day. At most wells, far more brine is produced than oil or gas, as much as 10 times more. It collects in tanks, and like an oil-and-gas garbage man, Peter picks it up and hauls it off to treatment plants or injection wells, where it’s disposed of by being shot back into the earth...

NEW YORK TIMES

Trump and the Teenager: A Climate Showdown at Davos DAVOS, Switzerland — Neither uttered the other’s name. But President Trump and the Swedish climate campaigner Greta Thunberg took unmistakable aim at each other on Tuesday at this conference of business and government figures, reprising their roles as antagonists on the global stage. The 73-year-old president and 17-year-old activist dominated the first full day of the gathering, painting starkly different visions of the future, and staking out opposite poles on the signature theme of this year’s forum: how best to manage a world of increasing temperatures, rising seas and catastrophic wildfires. Mr. Trump implicitly criticized Ms. Thunberg and other activists, saying they peddled warnings of doom at a time when his policies had ushered in a bright new era of economic prosperity for Americans. “They are the heirs of yesterday’s foolish fortune tellers,” the president said. “They predicted an overpopulation crisis in the 1960s, a mass starvation in the 70s, and an end of oil in the 1990s.” “This is not a time for pessimism,” Mr. Trump declared, adding, “Fear and doubt is not a good thought process.” ...

Making Yellow School Buses a Little More Green Some school districts are replacing diesel buses with electric models to benefit students and the environment. But the change is expensive so utilities like Dominion Energy are helping offset the cost. Just ask any parent — yellow school buses, with their classic look, signature smell and rumbling sound, remain largely unchanged from decades past. But with advances in technology, those old buses are beginning to reach the end of the line. A small but growing number of school districts are beginning to replace these older fossil fuel models with new electric buses. Motivated by evidence of the harmful effects of particulate emissions on both students’ health and performance and in an effort to reduce fuel costs and save on maintenance, a few innovative districts are making the transition. The biggest obstacle is the significantly higher cost of electric buses, which can be at least two to three times as expensive as replacement buses powered by diesel or another alternative fuel (there are also costs associated with installing charging equipment). Districts are getting help to offset the extra costs from sources including grants and legal settlements. And several utilities, motivated by environmental concerns as well as the potential to help lighten the electrical grid load, have stepped up to help hasten the process...